

# 23

# The Participation Forum\*

May 21, 1997

## **Topic: Participation in a Non-Participatory World: Lessons from USAID/Senegal's Outreach to Customers and Stakeholders**

*The joint appearance in the 23rd session of the Participation Forum of Administrator Brian Atwood and representatives of the Senegal mission coincided with a watershed moment for USAID and its reform processes. Much of the agency had made the transition to planning, implementation, and reporting based on results—a remarkable achievement—but the practice of USAID's other core values—customer focus, teamwork/participation, and empowerment/accountability—was lagging. Nowhere did these seem more distant than in Washington, where for a couple of years management attention had been absorbed by external crises, including the consolidation of the foreign affairs agencies. With these battles behind USAID, Mr. Atwood assured Forum participants in his introductory remarks that USAID/W would move the reforms forward: “I want to repair the (USAID field) mission-Washington disconnect....We need to be prepared to listen to our field missions and, in particular, to the strategic objective teams.”*

*In doing so, the agency will be guided by a growing body of experience from field programs, like the one described in this forum. Senegal Mission Director, Anne Williams, and a group of colleagues reviewed their experience in reaching out to customers and laid out the issues and choices that arise when a mission actively implements new agency policy on participation. Their presentation began with a “Masterpiece Theater” in six short acts and ended with a lively discussion. —Diane La Voy, Senior Policy Advisor for Participatory Development*

### **The Importance of Listening**

**Brian Atwood**

#### **Advice from Bill Cosby**

The essence of today's forum is listening. I was struck by a statement that Bill Cosby recently made in a commencement speech. He said, “You know, you're all very fortunate to have received such a wonderful education. But don't

leave here believing that the person who sweeps the floor is not as smart as you.”

Think about it. Many of the people that we work with in the developing world haven't received even a basic education. Does that mean that they don't understand the way they want their village or even their country to run?

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\*The Participation Forum is a series of monthly noontime meetings for USAID personnel to explore how to put into practice the Administrator's mandate to “build opportunities for participation into the development processes in which we are involved” (“Statement of Principles on Participatory Development,” November 16, 1993). Guest speakers from in and outside of USAID describe their experiences and enter into a general discussion of the theme of the session. A summary of the meeting is disseminated within USAID by E-mail, and readers are encouraged to engage in an E-mail dialogue. E-mail should be directed to Diane La Voy, using either the USAID directory or INTERNET, as DLAVOY@USAID.GOV. Printed copies of the Forum summaries will be distributed to participants and attendees from outside of USAID and others interested in participatory development. The Office of Health and Nutrition's Environmental Health Project (EHP) arranges logistics, maintains the mailing list, and prepares the Forum summaries.

Does that mean that they don't have the ingenuity to survive in very poor circumstances? Does that mean that they don't have a culture that has been passed on from one generation to another? Of course it doesn't. But, nevertheless, it may well be that we in USAID fail to be sensitive enough to listen to people in the countries where we work. If we do, we miss an awful lot. We may send people who have Ph.D. degrees in a particular specialty out to a village and feel that from them we can find out everything there is to know, never even stopping to think that the people we're talking to in the village may well be as smart as we are. The whole concept of grassroots listening is something that every one of us needs to think about a great deal.

I certainly haven't undertaken the job of USAID Administrator with the impression that I'm smarter than the people who work in this agency. I've tried to reach out, especially during some of the worst times that we've been through, to bring in small groups of people and to get their perspective on what's happening. A lot of the changes of direction that we've taken have been the result of really good feedback from people who are experiencing the reforms of USAID and have their own perspective on them.

One of my concerns about our reforms is that we have a rational system, but that doesn't mean that irrational things can't happen in that process. That doesn't mean that bureaucratic behavior, or simply dysfunctional behavior, can't throw us off the tracks.

There is a lot of literature on bureaucratic behavior. It's characterized by caution and risk-aversion—tendencies we've tried to overcome. When I first joined USAID, risk aversion was widespread. People thought that a very aggressive Inspector General would get us all into trouble if we weren't careful. But I have been encouraging people to take risks. We are trying to create a hospitable environment for risk-taking in USAID.

## **Washington-Field Disconnect**

The other aspect of bureaucratic behavior that could pervert the reforms is the disconnect between Washington and the field in the process for building budgets. It's extremely important that when mission personnel come to Washington for reviews of their strategy that they be encouraged by Washington. In this regard, we have a long way to go. Now that the battle over consolidation is behind us, I want to try to repair the mission-Washington disconnect. We need to break down, to the extent we can, the bureaucratic sort of barriers here. We need to be prepared to listen to our own field missions and, in particular, to the strategic objective teams. They have listened and made certain judgments about the way they can achieve results. If we, for whatever reason, thwart their desire to move in a certain direction after they have listened to the people of the country, the people who are their partners in getting the job done, then Washington isn't performing its role.

Despite the crisis that we've been through in this agency and the need to centralize things for a while to get through the 1996 fiscal year, we believe very strongly in decentralization and in giving as much support to the field as possible. We believe that it is the most effective way to get the job done.

## **Developing a New Paradigm in Senegal**

One of USAID's real innovators, Anne Williams, is going to show the way. The Senegal Mission produced a video to show its CEL (country experimental lab) in operation, in partnership with American NGOs and, more important, with the Senegalese people. I was never so impressed in my life. I'd been to Senegal many times, starting from the time I served in Africa in the 1960s. In 1985, I got to know President Diouf and his ministers at a big conference there on democracy. Some of the older-generation Senegalese are more French than the French in terms of their language and education. Many were educated

in France. But when President Diouf spoke to me in French and used the word “reengineering,” then I knew that we had crossed a certain line. My good friend, the minister of health, Ousmane N’Gom, was delighted that we had actually asked him and his ministry how we should proceed, how we could be partners, and what they thought about the results package.

Our actions have prompted other donors to look at the way they do business. It’s often top-down; it’s often “we know best what’s right for you.” The change we have brought about in this mission and in many more around the world is an important contribution to development. We are leading the way toward a new approach altogether.

## MASTERPIECE THEATER

### Participation and Partnership in Senegal: A New Paradigm

*Cast of characters:* Anne Williams, Mission Director; Woody Navin, Coach of the Program Core; Fatimata Sy Diallo, Coach of SO Team 1; Sadou Cisse, Coach of the Cross-Cutting Team, in the role of government official; Molly Melching, Director of the NGO TOSTAN; and Steve Wisecarver, USAID/Washington Desk Officer.

*Setting:* The year is 1996. The Senegal mission has started to work on a strategy that will cover the next eight years. They’ve already held three workshops to gauge the views of the U.S. and Senegalese governments and Senegalese NGOs and associations and the private sector. And they’ve assembled a dream team of Senegalese advisors. As Act I opens, the mission director wants to go even farther...

### ACT I: THE MISSION DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Fatimata: Hi, Anne. How are you doing?

Anne: I’m fine. Please, sit down. What can I do for you today?

Fatimata: I’m here to tell you where we are in developing our new strategy for the next eight years. These last two months the staff has worked very well. We’ve come up with some great ideas, and now we are ready to write our paper. We contacted Washington, and they may send out someone to help us. Also we may organize some meetings with our Senegalese partners just to present our ideas to them. What do you think?

Anne: Well, Fatimata, I’m a little bit surprised that you haven’t taken more into account the “P” words. You know what I mean by “P” words?

Fatimata: Participation?

Anne: Yes, I’m a little surprised that we haven’t thought about fostering **participation** ahead of time and changing our **paradigm**. What you’ve described to me is sort of the old way we did business. If you recall, we used to call in the consultants, write our strategy, and present it to government people, basically saying, “Take it or leave it.” That’s not quite what I mean by **partnership** and **participation**.

We’ve got to go out and listen to our customers and to our partners, not just the government. I know it’s difficult, I know it takes more time, and I know we don’t have that time, but I think we really have to do it.

I'd like to remind you of a Senegalese proverb that you once told me that says that it's useless to prepare a meal with sauce and couscous if no one likes couscous. Maybe we've got to find out whether the people want couscous or something else. Why don't you talk with your other colleagues. I've got to go talk to the Prime Minister about our new strategy now. Let's see where we can go.

Fatimata: Okay. I will think about it.

## **ACT II: THE CORRIDORS OF THE MISSION**

Woody: Hello, Fati.  
Fatimata: Hi, Woody.  
Woody: You look concerned.  
Fatimata: I am. I don't know what's going on with our new director. You remember her ideas about partnership? I think she's going too far. You know what she wants us to do? To go around the country and to talk to all sectors of Senegalese people. What do you think?  
Woody: You know, Fati, being just down the hall from Anne, I've learned to agree that these are very good ideas. Unfortunately, I've not stopped using on occasion the three-letter word "but." So, between you and me, it's our job to figure out how get them implemented.

The fact is that we are working on the congressional presentation, but we'll get beyond that. We're not quite sure how we're going to fund the effort because the NMS is only on version .13 and the money doesn't come in until .27, but we'll get beyond that. Our Administrative Office must provide logistics support, but their motto is "Just say no." We'll get beyond this too. And how many regions do we have to go into? All ten?

Fatimata: Ten regions.  
Woody: Ten regions.  
Fatimata: Ten regions.  
Woody: And probably in each region, we will want to do more than just go in and come out. Okay, so, all right. All ten regions. Well, do we even know our methodology?  
Fatimata: She hasn't talked about methodology yet. Let's talk to our government people and see what they think.

## **ACT III: THE OFFICE OF A SENEGALESE GOVERNMENT MINISTER**

Mr. Minister: I have something to tell you. I understand you're trying to do something called a customer survey.  
Fatimata: Exactly.  
Mr. Minister: Let me tell you what I think. Listen, this whole idea is really silly. You don't have to go beating about in the bush. We in the government can tell you everything you need to know. We know what the people's needs are and have been exploiting groups . . . I mean, exploring them for years. You do not need to waste any resources on this, I guarantee you. Anyway, let me know if there is anything I can do.  
Fatimata: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'll report that to Madame la Directrice.

## ACT IV: THE MISSION DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

*Scene: A few days later.*

Anne: I understand what you're saying, Fati. I understand that there are logistics problems, and I understand that the survey will fall during Ramadan. You know, I've been out in the bush during Ramadan. People still talk to you.

We really need to change our paradigm. We need to get out. We need to listen to our customers. I will tell you that I strongly believe that if we don't go out and listen, we really won't understand. In other words, we **have** to do this.

Let me check with Washington to find out whether or not we're going to get the money, but I'm hoping we can do it outside the NMS. That's what we've asked for.

*She picks up the phone.*

Anne: Hello, Steve?

Steve: Yes, this is Steve. Anne, listen. I just got this e-mail from you on additional PD&S funding for this crazy customer survey you want to do. We just don't have that kind of money for this, you know. And you want to talk to the Senegalese before you set your strategic objectives? Listen, listen, listen. No, no. Stop. Don't talk to them, please. It's the best advice I can give you. Let me check with DP. I've got to see what our sector controls are, what our earmark information is. You just can't go out and set your strategic objectives. We've got some priorities back here you've got to take into account first. Okay?

*He hangs up.* [Aside: That Senegalese sun must be really baking her brain. She's talking about real participation out there.]

## ACT V: MOLLY'S OFFICE

*October 1996*

Molly: Sure, we can do it. I'm convinced we can do it. We did this type of exercise with the PADLOS (Project to Support Local Development in the Sahel) Education Project with the Club de Sahel. We went out to many villages and just listened to what people thought about their past and their vision of the future.

But I think it's a two-step process. For the customer survey, first we need to prepare the 120 surveyors who will go out, that is, the USAID people, the government of Senegal partners, and the other partners like the NGOs. We could have a two-day seminar and get a consensus on the questionnaire so that people feel like it's their questionnaire and that these are important questions to be asking. And then, some people need listening techniques and some cross-cultural skills, because they're not quite sure how to approach villagers. Some have never even been to the field.

The second step would be pre-customer survey discussions with the customers. They may have never really thought about the issues we'll want to raise in quite this way. The pre-survey discussions would allow them to reflect upon the issues before the national teams came in and asked them questions. So in order to do that, we could

hold a two-day workshop for the facilitators, who would go out to the villages first, so that they would know what questions to ask, followed by two-day discussions with the facilitators and the village groups in preparation for the national teams. What do you think, Anne?

Anne: I'll tell you, Molly, it sounds good to me. What do you think, Fati?  
Can we do it?  
Fatimata: So, let's do it!  
Molly: Let's do it! We can do it!

## **ACT VI: THE MISSION DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

*A few weeks later.*

Anne: What do you think, guys? How did it go? What did you see and what did you learn?  
Fatimata: It went very, very well. Most of the people in the mission really appreciated the chance to be involved in the survey, especially people from the Office of Finance and the Executive Office and many of the support staff. They had the opportunity to talk to people, and now they realize how the work they are doing affects customers.  
Woody: I'll comment on the other donors and how they all interacted, and perhaps a bit on the ministries. The other donors really think that USAID has something. They're worried that they might have to do the same thing, but they realize that this is important stuff. And on the ministry side, they found out all kinds of things.  
Mr. Minister: Well, you know, maybe soon we will be considering changing a little bit the way we do business. We were amazed at the things we heard. This time we did not go out on our own. We went out with the donor. The people really know what they want. This is not what they tell us when we come alone. But I was surprised to hear that they were very unhappy with the government. They never told us that before.  
Anne: Molly, what do you think the villagers felt about this experience?  
Molly: We got lots of feedback from the villagers on this. The first thing that surprised them was that people were coming just to ask their opinion, and they really appreciated that. They said that was one of the first times that people had come just to get their thoughts on, for example, strategic objectives for the next ten years.

According to our facilitators, the villagers first assumed that the survey was for a project or to get money from some agency. They wanted to know what they should say. And the facilitators said, "No, no, no. You don't have to say anything. To the contrary. We want to know what you really think about what's been going on in your country, in your region, and what you see as a better way of doing things in the years to come." That really astonished them. And they said, "You mean, we can be honest?"

That preparation helped the villagers to get thinking. And when the national survey teams came, they got some well-thought-out answers from the people.

## **CURTAIN**

*The Strategic Objectives Workshop*

After the survey we took all the questionnaires and responses, translated them into French (in each region, we had had facilitators who spoke the local language), correlated the information, and called in a sociologist to help us interpret it.

Next, I wanted to bring together representatives of all our partners and customers to help us set the outlines of our strategic objectives. I proposed that we do this in a three-day workshop, or “*atelier*,” with about 200 people. We decided we couldn’t handle more than 200 because we wanted ten groups of 20 each—eight to work on strategic objectives and two to work on the subject of “whither goest USAID/Senegal.”

There was an enormous amount of work and not a lot of time to do it, because this was during the period of R4 preparation and Hillary Clinton’s visit. It also came at a time when we were completing annual evaluations. So we were a rather busy mission.

We selected 200 people in their own capacity. For example, we invited members of the press, not as press, but as people who were journalists who knew the country.

We carefully structured the *atelier* so that there was a strict agenda. The small

groups had to come out with a product: one strategic objective. We forced people into a paradigm change so that they couldn’t come out with everything but the kitchen sink. They actually had to prioritize and choose one objective. We structured the *atelier* so that on the third day, if we ended up with eight totally different strategic objectives, we would have had to vote.

We made the decision that we would do this totally in-house in terms of Senegal; we would not bring in outside consultants. We had the capacity within Senegal to run an *atelier* like this. We hired a firm to organize and facilitate the *atelier* just a week before it was to start. They did a fabulous job—everything from hotel arrangements to facilitating discussions: we had facilitators in every group and a main facilitator.

The *atelier* took place the last week of April. About 240 people attended the opening sessions; about 150 participated actively during all three days. The meeting ended with an amazing consensus and two strategic objectives, which we have been back here this week discussing.

It was a complete paradigm change. It took a lot of time and effort. And one of the questions that we will raise as we go on is, is it worth it?

**DISCUSSION SESSION****The Customer Survey Team**

**Diane La Voy:** Woody, could you lay out who actually went out and did the survey? I know some donors and people from different ministries were involved. Maybe you could discuss the issues associated with selecting surveyors.

**Woody Navin:** The participants in the customer survey included about 45 USAID staff. As mentioned, it was a real occasion for some people on our staff who had never stepped off the peninsula of Dakar to enter

Senegal. There’s a big difference. So it was an eye-opener for financial management staff, for our librarians, and for others.

A number of NGOs participated, as well as ministry people. We didn’t get all six ministries, but many from health, education, and women’s affairs were involved. We also had representatives from Peace Corps, UNDP, and the Canadian International Development Agency, but not from the World Bank.

**Diane La Voy:** I know that there are some folks in Senegal, including even the sociologist who analyzed the survey findings, who had

problems with the lack of scientific sampling methods. There wasn't, for instance, a random choice of villages. What was involved in selecting the villages for the survey?

**Anne Williams:** I never looked on this as a scientific survey. For me, what was important was the process of going out and listening in all of the different regions. We went to urban, peri-urban, and rural areas. I knew we would get a lot of feedback, because I myself go out once a quarter, sometimes for a week, sometimes for two weeks if I can. I know that the findings wouldn't be scientifically precise. But I also knew there would be a lot of coherence in what people would be saying and that the experience of going out and listening would change our paradigm and get us into a new habit. We would be able to use the information we obtained even though we couldn't claim that it had scientific validity. Sometimes we get so tied up in being scientific about surveys that we end up not doing anything. We say, "We can't do it ourselves. It's too difficult." And we hire a consultant who conducts the survey. It may be more scientific, but there's a benefit to listening to people directly.

**Molly Melching:** We selected the sites with the help of many people throughout the country. We had only about two weeks to select all 90 sites and do some training in each of them. But we were determined to get the job done.

### Preparation of the Surveyors

**Diane La Voy:** Molly, your NGO specializes in training: literacy training and other forms of capacity-building for villagers. How did you prepare the surveyors to go out? What did you put them through that helped transform them from program administrators to listeners?

**Molly Melching:** One of the main things we did during the two days of preparation was to elicit their participation in writing up the questionnaire, so that they felt like the questions were their questions.

We also talked about cross-cultural sensitivity. For example, we took some participants aside before one of the sessions

and asked them to pretend they were villagers who had just met with a terrible national survey team. They were to imagine the worst scenario possible. What would they say to each other after the team left? At first they hesitated, saying they couldn't do skits, but they were extraordinary. They came up with just the type of things a surveyor shouldn't do in a village.

Playing the part of villagers, they said, "Did you see those people come in? My gosh! All they cared about were per diems. They didn't care about what we think. Did you see? One person was even reading his newspaper. They didn't even bother to greet us. And all they wanted to talk about was this questionnaire they had, and they didn't even ask how our families were."

In this way the survey teams identified pitfalls of cross-cultural understanding. Eventually, they wrote down how to approach villagers in the right way so that they would enjoy the exchange and be able to say what they really thought.

### Survey Questions

**Sharon Pauling:** How consistent were the customer surveys from village to village?

**Molly Melching:** The questions to be used by facilitators were prepared in advance with the participation of the national survey teams. The questions were very open and general. For each of six areas—the environment, politics, social services, demography, culture and values, and the economy—two sets of questions were asked. The first set was about the past and present: describe the situation existing in 1960 at Independence and the evolution between 1960 and 1996—major problems, efforts to resolve problems, and tendencies noted. The second set was about the future: describe the society in which you would like to live in 2006; what actions are necessary in each area to achieve this society?

We couldn't get to all communities in advance to train facilitators to prepare the villagers. But we did the best we could. Facilitators were selected from NGO personnel familiar with the villages and conversant in the local languages. The process didn't always

happen as anticipated because there was not always enough time to prepare the villagers.

**Woody Navin:** One of the interesting/surprising things learned from the customer surveys was that most Senegalese people don't like or trust their government. For example, only 25% of the people voted in the last election. Villagers would like to have the money sent to them directly without the "middlemen costs" associated with going through the government or even NGOs. People know they are getting the short end of the stick. USAID realizes that it is not practical to do this and that the current government will probably be in power for the next ten years. It was very useful for USAID to get feedback directly from local people and not filtered through government officials.

### Setting Parameters for the Consultation

**Brian Atwood:** How did you establish parameters for the consultation? We have five agency goals. We also have, as Anne knows all too well, certain earmarks, like the one for child survival. How did you establish the parameters so that you didn't get feedback from villagers who said, "We need you to build a bridge," when USAID is not in that business any more?

**Anne Williams:** First, the customer survey was mainly to get people's feeling for where they are and where they want to go. It wasn't even in the context of the USAID program. The villagers' vision for what they want for their country was one of the pieces of information we used in the three-day *atelier*.

**Brian Atwood:** After you had the survey results, you talked about creating two new strategic objectives. Very few of our missions are starting up from scratch. We have what we call "mortgages," ongoing programs in areas that won't be recommended by the consultation. I suppose that's what you're struggling with now in Washington as you try to defend the two new SOs.

**Anne Williams:** At the *atelier*, we tried to give everybody there the same information. We presented what our studies had shown. We gave the "RAPID" presentation on the

health/population situation. We made a Powerpoint presentation on the environment. The government presented its Ninth Development Plan. As mission director, I outlined the constraints USAID has to work within. I emphasized that all partnerships have their limits. USAID's money comes from the American people, through Congress, and we have a number of constraints. Anything we do has to be within all of the constraints.

In other words, there were three overlapping templates: What our customers were saying; what the government of Senegal was saying; and the USAID constraints.

We wrestled with a dilemma: Should the mission talk to Washington first and then go talk to its partners or should the partners be consulted first? I maintain both should be done together.

We have two new strategic objectives but we also recognize that we can still continue ongoing programs. We're taking what we believe is the next step in the dynamic process of development. It's not USAID's strategy for Senegal, but the U.S.-Senegal strategy. Both sides have to agree to buy into the process.

**Brian Atwood:** What worries me is that our emphasis on results packages and strategic objectives will keep us too narrowly focused and that we will become too focused on the numbers, on numerical results, and we will miss some broader results.

**Woody Navin:** We are fully aware of earmarks and trying to work within constraints. We are juggling the need to report on results on an annual basis; yet, as development professionals, we know that many of the problems that we are tackling take a long time to solve and involve changing policies and institutions and deeply ingrained habits.

### The New Strategic Objectives

**Pirie Gall:** You have been talking for about 45 minutes, and it has all been on process. What was the outcome?

**Anne Williams:** The two strategic objectives that we came up with were, first, an SO on job creation. People felt it was very important to reduce the 45% under-employment rate,

especially for young people and women. There is a great need for income generation. Five of the eight groups had this as their most important SO. The second SO was on decentralization. In Senegal, decentralization laws are on the books, but actual decentralization is being implemented slowly. This SO is causing us some trouble in Washington because it is unclear how it relates to various agency SOs using earmarked funds. For example, does it fall under democratization or health? While Washington gave us the signal to go ahead with considerable Washington input, there remains lots of reservations about the decentralization strategic objective.

### **Group Process in the *Atelier***

**Elise Storck:** Could you discuss the process used in the eight groups during the *atelier*?

**Anne Williams:** Participants were given the same background material, but they did not select their own groups. Membership in the various working groups of the *atelier* was assigned so that people would not band together in subject matter groups. The idea was to get a good mix. Senegalese facilitators were used. They kept people in bounds and limited the discussion to one strategic objective.

**Diane La Voy:** I was a “voyeur” during the *atelier*. It was a struggle for many groups, especially at the beginning. The process was very democratic with people from various socioeconomic groups and different social classes, sitting down together and contributing on an equal basis. I saw some nice interactions develop. It took people a time to realize that there wasn’t a “right” answer, that they weren’t supposed to “discover” what USAID wanted to do. It took time for it to sink in that they were to do the planning.

### **Response of Other Donors**

**Alex Ross:** USAID is definitely a leader in the area of customer participation. How did other NGOs and donors view the process? Do you think they will try to emulate USAID?

**Anne Williams:** I went to a cocktail party shortly after the *atelier* and my French counterpart and others mentioned the process to me. It was clear that people had been discussing it. I also found out that the process was mentioned at a World Bank meeting and held up as a model to be emulated, as heads nodded around the table.

### **The Role of Washington**

**Cathryn Thorup:** What can we in Washington do to help processes like this to go on?

**Anne Williams:** Listen. Be better partners. Participate more fully. We had money for people to come out for the *atelier* and only Diane La Voy and Phil Jones (AFR/SD) came out. Be more flexible. The reporting system fosters rigidity.

### **More on the Customer Survey**

**Larry Salmen, World Bank:** Listening isn’t new. We began at the Bank in 1981, but the participatory processes haven’t really caught on in institutional terms. Now there is reason to think that it will. Did you find that use of a questionnaire, rather than open-ended questions and focus groups and observations, restricted the information you were able to obtain?

**Molly Melching:** Actually it wasn’t a questionnaire. The questions were open-ended and elicited a lot of give and take. For example, one of the domains was demography. In one village we were talking about how the village had increased 30% in population over the last ten years. When asked if they thought this process would continue, they agreed it would. When asked what they thought of that, they at first said it would be wonderful. When reminded that they had talked about the lack of jobs and land, they at first were stunned and then began talking about family planning. The women said that they had been talking about the need for family planning for a long time. One man said that now he knew why. I mention this, not because we planned to get into the area of family planning, but to show how open-ended the questions were and how they elicited discussion. The small group

process enabled local people to come up with their own solutions. For example, family planning and monogamy ended up being suggested by one man as solutions for problems caused by over-population.

**Margaret Guell:** I understand that during Ramadan there are certain things one wouldn't do. How did you deal with that?

**Woody Navin:** With the advice of my Senegalese colleagues, I made the decision that we could do the survey then. Ramadan, Islam, does not prohibit it. It's just rarely done. Actually, it turned out to be very good because the villagers don't have to prepare lunch.

### Next Steps

**Noreen O'Meara:** Do you plan to go back to the customer as the process continues?

**Anne Williams:** Here is how I see the process evolving. We moved from the survey to the workshop. Now we are back in Washington for consultation. When we return to Senegal we will discuss what we learned from Washington and find out what the government thinks and get suggestions about how we

should implement the new objectives. We will then form multidimensional focus groups to discuss the evolving plans. At the end of October, the process will culminate in another workshop, about the same size as the first one, in which we will present our results framework. We're hoping to get a lot of Washington people out in Senegal working with us and our partners and customers.

The problem is that this is a very resource-intensive process, and our resources—both time and money—are limited. I could go on and on about how many conflicting priorities there were, but I don't need to. Everybody says we don't have enough time. It would be nice if this was all we were doing, but we are implementing our current program, we are implementing reengineering, and we are trying to develop a new strategy all at the same time.

Is it worth it? Yes, because it's about time we started looking at sustainability. If we don't, we're spending a lot of money for nothing. I believe that sustainability comes from ownership and that what we're trying to do. By broadening and deepening ownership for what we're doing, we are laying a foundation for better implementation and sustainable results.

### Communications from the E-Mail Bag

#### **“Fantastic” Experience in Senegal**

**Sophie Ndiaye:** “I am unable to attend the forum because I am presently in Senegal, but I am interested in all the issues that will be raised. I hope the forum will allow Washington to share the invaluable experience we had here in Senegal during the nation-wide survey during which we exchanged a lot of information with our partners and customers. The most fantastic aspect of the experience was that our partners took part in the ‘game.’ They really were able to bring their wide experience to the process.”

#### **Creating Freedom Spaces**

**Joel M. Jutkowitz:** “When we undertook the civil society study for CDIE that culminated in Gary Hansen's paper on civil advocacy, one case that was examined was that of Chile. In Chile, donors played a significant role in creating the freedom spaces that helped to preserve the capacity of opposition groups to eventually work to move the country to re-establishing democracy. These freedom spaces incorporated new political actors, such as women, as well as providing an umbrella for more traditional political groups.

“USAID can work to create similar freedom spaces through a participatory approach in ‘non-participatory societies’ which may then become the building-blocks for a future democratic order. Is that the case in Senegal?”

### **Reaching Hearts and Minds**

**Lawrence Salmen:** “Finally reading your ‘Participation Forum’ of January 23, 1997 on listening in Bosnia, I am impressed by Jerry Hyman’s allusion to listening as a way to touch base with emotions rather than just intellect. After listening to development initiatives throughout what is becoming a long career in all sectors and regions, I am convinced that perhaps the major gap in developmental assistance is our inability to reach what we once called ‘the hearts’—as well as the minds—of those we are seeking to assist. In-depth listening, with its intrinsic respect for the reality of the other, is an essential means to reaching the emotional, or affective, part of human life: ‘what makes Johnny run.’ I do believe we can listen in-depth in a systematic manner which will influence project management and policy formulation. At the World Bank we have done this in over 150 projects and roughly 50 policy-oriented research activities. But we can and must do much more, throughout the development community.

“I heartily commend you for your increasing attention to listening as an entry point to what is the heart of development.”

### **Participation in USAID/Bangladesh**

**Dick Brown (Mission Director, USAID/Bangladesh):** “Since beginning its CEL experience two years ago, USAID/Bangladesh has continued to explore and expand its participation activities on a number of fronts:

“(1) *Customers.* In all three of the mission’s strategic sectors (population/health, food security, and responsive government), we have undertaken rapid appraisals with poor people throughout the country to

- gain a preliminary sense of how our customers perceive their problems and needs,
- validate planned activities and/or measure progress against targeted results, and
- find out from our customers how they themselves define and perceive poverty so that we can better identify synergies among our strategic objectives and better target our efforts toward our mission goal of poverty reduction.

“(2) *Design and Implementation.* We now routinely design our new activities in full and active cooperation with our partners. We have sat side-by-side with our partners and jointly determined what a design should look like and how it should be implemented. Increasingly, USAID is working more actively and collaboratively with our partners in implementation (rather than our just signing a contract and waiting for results).

“(3) *Internal Mission.* All strategic implementation is now done through multifunctional teams. Given our customer focus and our use of rapid appraisal methodology, we have involved secretaries, agricultural officers, health experts, executive officers, etc. as field interviewers, asking our customers open-ended questions across all sectors, then discussing and reaching consensus on the responses with their colleagues from throughout the mission. Now most ‘support’ staff in the mission (financial, legal, contracting, program, PDO, economics) serve directly on strategic objectives teams, participating actively and fully in decisions affecting design and implementation at a much earlier stage than under pre-reengineered circumstances.

“(4) *Stakeholders.* Other donors and GOB entities that affect and may be affected by our strategy and program but which do not participate directly in our designs and implementation are now consulted and kept more actively informed at a much earlier date on our plans and activities than in the past.”

### **JICA's Participatory Development Approach**

**David Breg:** “One of the goals of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) program since its creation in 1954 has been the spread of development successes to local communities and people living in poverty. This goal was formalized when Japan's ODA Charter came into effect in 1992. According to the charter, Japan's ODA must seek to improve the economic and social capacities of people as agents of development. The broad-based participation of citizens in aid implementation would be the means for accomplishing this goal.

“In the Japanese ODA paradigm, participatory development is linked with good governance, which provides the legal and functional basis needed to promote participation and create the environment in which participatory processes take place. Participatory development introduces a bottom-up approach to remedy any shortcomings of the government-led approach.

“Some of the benefits of long-term participatory development envisioned by Japanese aid officials include raising the awareness of citizens at the local level, forming community groups, upgrading resource management abilities and improving capabilities for external negotiations. To accomplish these goals, officials from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA—the government agency responsible for implementing the technical assistance portion of Japan's ODA) are aware that the following activities are needed and should be considered when formulating their development projects:

- 1) Strengthening grassroots community organizations involved in participation at the most basic level.
- 2) Upgrading the self-reliant capabilities of the socially disadvantaged through improved access to basic education.
- 3) Promoting the participatory development capabilities of governments from the central to the local levels.

“When JICA officials formulate new projects—especially comprehensive, large-scale technical cooperation projects—they try to introduce participatory planning concepts to the project's logical framework. When a JICA survey team designs a project activity, they will often organize a participatory workshop. Representatives from central and local governments and NGOs, and citizens from rural communities who will be affected by the planned project will be invited to the workshop to meet with members of the survey team. During the workshop, the following analyses are conducted.

- 1) Participation Analysis: identify different groups in the project area, understand their current status, and select a target beneficiary group.
- 2) Problem Analysis: develop a problem tree of issues to be addressed.
- 3) Objectives Analysis: develop an objective tree of goals to accomplish.
- 4) Alternative Analysis: prioritize goals within the objective tree.
- 5) Project Design Matrix: use the findings of the meeting to develop the logical framework.

“JICA is also implementing activities that have a direct impact on rural communities, such as basic education, primary health care, and social forestry. The participation of the targeted beneficiaries in these projects is essential from project planning to implementation.

“Questions about this brief overview of Japan's concept of participatory development are welcome. David Breg, Program Officer, [jica06@jicausa.com](mailto:jica06@jicausa.com).”